

DOE initiatives to improve the quality of life and status of children, youth and disabled persons

Report to the Joint Monitoring Committee on
Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of
Children, Youth and Disabled Persons

August 2008



Presentation Structure

The DOE's responses

in relation to...

→ Access to Education **for...**

- children with special needs
- youth in conflict with the law
- children living on the streets

→ Access to Education **through...**

- funding norms
- funding opportunities





Challenges


- Learners with disability experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education and the ravages of apartheid are still being felt in this sector in post-apartheid SA
- Learners with special schools were catered for primarily through special schools (regardless of level of disability) which were few, of variable quality and mainly accessible to urban children.
- Learners with disability in deep rural areas still have little or no access to education and the problem continues for out-of-school youth with disability.
- Many special schools sit with long waiting lists, irrespective of the quality of education they are able to provide.
- Primary challenge for DoE remains **increasing access to quality education** for learners with disability.



Responding to the challenge

- A policy on Special Needs and Inclusive Education was developed (White paper 6, 2001) to increase access to education through providing education for learners with special needs at a range of settings in line with level of disability and therefore levels of support needed.
- The policy provides the framework for:
 - providing access to special schools for learners needing high levels of support;
 - Converting ordinary schools to full-service schools for learners with low-to medium support needs, and relieve pressure on special schools;
 - Mainstream disabled learners who can be accommodated in ordinary schools.


Children with Special Needs



Progress in Special Schools

- DoE Audit on Special Schools revealed a number of problems including poor quality of infrastructure; under-prepared educators; and shortage or unavailability of essential assistive devices.
- Approximately R50 million was spent in the various provinces on these schools to address the findings of the audit in the past year.
- Educators have received training mainly in the areas of Braille and in using the South African Sign Language.
- Guidelines for Quality Education and Support in Special Schools have been developed and are currently being distributed to both special schools and education districts.

Children with Special Needs



Progress: Development of full-service schools

- 30 mainstream schools being upgraded and resourced to serve learners with low to moderate barriers to learning
- Physical infrastructure development
 - ◆ Mainly the provision of environmental access such as ramps, suitable toilets etc.
 - ◆ Staff trained to screen, identify, assess learners' needs for appropriate support and on adaptation of NCS to accommodate learner needs;
 - ◆ 10 mainstream schools being upgraded in 2008 (to open doors in 2009); 20 being upgraded in 2009
 - ◆ Draft specifications have been developed for Full Service Schools and are being refined for publication
 - ◆ Provincial Physical planners have been trained to understand environmental access issues for inclusion and these will be incorporated in any new plans for schools.



Progress: Identifying support needs

- The SIAS (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support) Strategy document has been developed, field-tested and finalised. This will guide the appropriate placement and support of learners.
- 1600 Teachers and District Officials across all 9 provinces have been trained to date to use the strategy in the 30 districts identified to lead in the field test of the Inclusion policy..



Progress: Advocacy to include out of school children

- Focus will be to encourage parents to use Full Service Schools where children can benefit from placement there.
- An Inclusive Education Website has been developed and creates a learning space for teachers, parents and schools
 - <http://www.thutong.org.za/LearningSpaces/InclusiveEducation>
- Special advertising will take place beginning in September to encourage parents & guardians of learners with special needs to contact the DoE for assistance in placement of out of school learners
- A Stakeholder Inclusive Education Forum has been established to consult and work with the Disability Sector on all these development and collaboration with Depts of Social Development and Justice will be strengthened.



Children awaiting trial

- DoE participates in Social Cluster (ISCCJ) planning for dealing with children in conflict with the law.
- DoE is implementing a plan agreed upon with Social Development for the handover of reform schools and schools of industries to the latter.
- The education programme for awaiting trial and sentenced children is currently under review for strengthening as part of the handover plan.
- Correctional Services will provide monthly stats to DoE to track movement of awaiting trial children to ensure provision of education wherever they are.



Young Offenders

- Partnership: Dept of Educ/Dept of Correctional Services/ Umsobomvu/ ETDP SETA
- Training of youth offenders as ABET facilitators
- ABET practitioner qualification – through a learnership
- Provision of ABET programmes to young offenders;
- Support DCS in curriculum and examinations
- Partnership in advocacy and social mobilisation – youth offenders participating in Adult Learner Week
- Collaboration an integral part of the Khari Gude programme.



Access to FET Colleges

→ The DOE FET College Bursary Scheme

- FET Colleges are a growing sector intended to provide quality education and vocational skills through modern, relevant and responsive National Certificate (Vocational) programmes
- Government has invested R1,9 billion to recapitalise FET Colleges in order for them to offer the NC(V) programmes as quality programmes.



Access to FET Colleges (continued)

- The funding formula for the NC(V) programmes ensures that Government provides 80% of the total cost of the programmes – to guarantee and open up access to even the poorest of our youth.
- The balance of 20% is the total cost to the student.
- A DoE FET College Bursary Scheme has been established and covers the 20% for those students who cannot pay the college fees. This bursary scheme has largely been responsible for the growth in the sector.



Access to FET Colleges (continued)

- R 600 million is available for bursaries from 2007 – 2009.
- The bursaries are currently available for National Certificate (Vocational) study at **public** FET colleges.
- The bursary scheme caters for **South African students** who are **academically deserving** and **financially needy** and have enrolled for any of the National Certificate (Vocational) programmes in any of the public FET Colleges.
- The bursaries **cover tuition, travel and accommodation** costs.



Access to Higher Education Institutions

└─ The National Student Financial Aid Scheme

- Funded to a large extent by national government.
- Grants loans and bursaries to eligible students at public higher education institutions.
- Good academic programme leads to a large percentage of the scheme being converted to a full bursary.
- Repayment however necessary to ensure sustainability of programme.
- Recovery record of loan money has been reasonable good.



Access to Initial Teacher Education

The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme

- Prestigious bursary introduced primarily to increase pool of quality teachers able to teach in nationally identified priority subject areas, in schools that are in most need of their services
- Launched by the DOE in 2007 and provides full cost bursaries which cover tuition, accommodation, book allowance and stipend to successful applicants.
- The bursaries had an average value of R35 000 in 2008.
- The bursary is administered by NSFAS and is available at all 22 HEIs in the country.



Access to Initial Teacher Education (cont)

Some figures related to Funza Lushaka...

- In 2007 the DoE allocated 120 m across all 23 HEI's to allocate bursaries for initial teacher education in priority areas namely.
- A total of 3669 bursaries was allocated
- At the end of 2007, 850 recipients qualified through the bursary.
- In 2008 an amount of 180 m was allocated.
- Just over 5000 bursaries have been awarded this year.
- Between 900 and 1000 Funza Lushaka teachers will qualify this year from an allocation of R300 m.



Access to Initial Teacher Education (cont)

Students selected for a FL bursary must be:

- High performing school learners and university students with good academic records.
- Committed to a career in teaching.
- Prepared to teach in any school in which they are placed.



Access to Initial Teacher Education (cont)

A specific focus on selection of rural students

- A concerted effort is being made to select outstanding rural students as beneficiaries of the bursary.
- A recruitment campaign focuses strongly on attracting applicants from the Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, as well as from the Dinaledi schools through personalized letters to students.
- Provided rural students meet the criteria for the bursary, there is an excellent chance that they will receive it.



Access to Initial Teacher Education (cont)

Placement of qualified bursars

- Bursars are required to serve as teachers in the employ of the DOE for the number of years they hold the bursary.
- They are placed through provincial placement procedures in schools which need their services, including rural schools.
- Through this mechanism we hope to improve the number and quality of teachers who teach in rural schools, thus impacting positively on teaching and learning for rural learners.